REMARKS

In this response to the Restriction Requirement Office Action of October 4, 2007, Group I, claims 1 - 3, 5, 6, 8, 13 - 18, and 20, drawn to a first agent for digesting a protein highly resistant to degradation and a first recited method of using the same. This election is made with traverse, based on what appears to be a misunderstanding by the Examiner with respect to the relationship of claim 4 (Group III) to claim 1 (Group I); in that regard, Applicant has herein amended claim 4, to clarify the relationship and make it dependent on claim 1. The Examiner is respectfully requested to consider Applicant's further comments below.

(A) With respect to the Examiner's position that the first enzyme of claim 1 is not the same as the second enzyme of claim 4 (set forth in the last paragraph on page 2 of the Office Action), Applicant has amended claim 4 to make it dependent on claim 1, thereby clarifying that these first and second enzymes are the same.

(B) With respect to the Examiner's position that the method of claims 6, 17, 18, and 22 is an *in vitro* method, while the method of claims 9 - 11 is an *in vivo* treatment method (see the first paragraph on page 3 of the Office Action), not only the method of claims 6, 17, 18, and 22 (i.e., method for digesting a protein highly resistant to denaturation and degradation), but also the method of claims 9 - 11 (i.e., method for detoxifying a pathogenic prion protein) are *in vitro*. This is clear, e.g., from the following description in the specification:

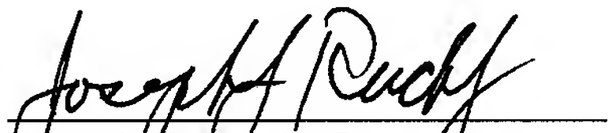
> "As the subject to be digested or the subject to be detoxified (hereinafter collectively and simply referred to as "subject to be treated"), there may be mentioned, for example, feed which may contain a pathogenic prion protein (for example, meat and bone meal, or compost), instruments or equipment on which surfaces may be contaminated with a pathogenic prion protein (for example, instruments or equipment for slaughter, examination, or operations), or facilities in which a pathogenic prion protein may be present (for example, a slaughterhouse, a cowshed where BSE was present, or a laboratory for infection)." (see paragraph bridging pages 24 - 25 of the specification)

If the Examiner considers that an explicit recitation in this regard would be appropriate in claims 9 - 11, please advise the undersigned attorney.

If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the local Washington, D.C. telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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